



Sports bras to help stabilize rocking breasts?

Question

Hi Alice,

I want to know which kind of upper clothes I have to wear when running. It's a shame to say, but my breasts are rocking while running. When I watched Jane Fonda's aerobic video, her breasts didn't move. Could you tell me what steps I must take?

Answer

Dear Reader,

While you didn't mention what you have tried wearing when you run, it sounds like you need some extra support on top. A properly fitted sports bra can do the trick. Poor-fitting bras promote uncontrolled and uncomfortable breast motions that increase with more vigorous physical activity, such as running and basketball. As a result, exercise can cause discomfort and soreness of the breasts.

When shopping for a sports bra, a good fit is the key. If you're an A or B cup, the "compression"-type bra will probably be sufficient. This style holds your breasts quite snugly and prevents them from bouncing. If you're a C cup or larger, you might want firmer support while exercising. The "encapsulation"-type sports bra may be a better bet, providing more support by separating each breast into a molded cup.

Regardless of the sports bra style, the following tips will help you find one that's comfortable and supportive enough for you:

- Make sure the sports bra fits snugly to limit breast movement, but not so tightly that you have trouble breathing!
- Stick with straps that are at least one-inch wide and adjustable to prevent painful digging in and annoying slippage off the shoulders. Some people prefer a Y-, T-, or racer-back style for this reason.
- Choose a fabric that has limited up-down stretch for the most support possible.
- Look for covered seams, which won't rub your skin raw.
- Choose seamless cups — seams over the nipples could cause chafing.
- Examine hooks and closures to be certain they're covered with fabric or coated with cushioning material.
- Select a sports bra that's made from synthetic fibers (such as polypropylene, CoolMax®, Supplex®, or Lycra®) that breathe and wick moisture. Fabrics that absorb sweat, such as cotton, can feel uncomfortably wet, warm, and weighty.
- If you have sensitive skin, applying some petroleum jelly to skin irritated by sports bra wear can provide some relief. Areas most prone to chafing include the ribcage (through contact with the chest elastic band), underarms (by the armholes), and shoulders (from the straps digging into the skin).

Try on various sports bras *before* buying one. Jog in place and jump up and down to see if it supports you adequately. Also check to see that wearing the bra doesn't limit your movements in any way. If you're still

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unsure, query an experienced lingerie salesperson at a department or specialty store. If all else fails, you can always inquire with a female exercise instructor about what works for her. Here's to happy (and rocking free) exercise!

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